

# Developments in Sikh Politics

(1900—1911)

( A R E P O R T )

*by*

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## FOREWORD

By Dr. Balhir Singh Ph. D. (London)

The Chief Khalsa Diwan sent to me the printed forms of what is known as Mr. D. Petrie's Report. This relates to the developments in Sikh Politics (1900—11) written by the Assistant Director of Intelligence, Govt. of India. The report as sent to me is edited with great care by Sardar Nahar Singh M. A. In order to do justice to the report, I thought of my friend Mr. J. M. Chatterji Bar-at-law, who had not only known Mr. D. Petrie personally but had taken an active part in revolutionary movements in the Punjab during 1907 — 10. I felt his comments relevant to this topic would be more authentic; and on my request he has furnished me with a short note on the subject. I give below Mr. Chatterji's comments which I feel do full justice to the subject and will be read with great interest.

"My acquaintance with Sir David Petrie (He got his knighthood in about 1920) begins with 1915 and continued till 1939. I met him on several occasions mostly on business and used to spend quite a few hours with him. This

long acquaintance entitles me to speak about him with conviction. Moreover the brochure covers the period of about twelve years (1900 — 1911), in connection with the Chief Khalsa Diwan and the Khalsa College, Amritsar and other activities pertaining particularly to the Sikhs.

"I too have been closely associated with the political upheaval in the province during 1907—10 as a revolutionary missionary disguised as a Sanyasi in ochre garb and travelled extensively as such, in very remote corners of the Punjab, I worked in collaboration with Lala Hardayal, Sardar Ajit Singh and Sufi Ambha Parshad and possess in a way first-hand knowledge of the political conditions which swayed the Jats of Punjab in those days.

"Mr. David Petrie's assessment of the anti-British feeling during the period is mostly accurate. He had special facilities for collecting data and pursuing investigations in this direction having been incharge of the C. I. D. in those days. His analysis is pretty convincing. His remarks about a feeling of revolt among some sections of the Sikh Regiments may not be palatable to diehards, but Mr. Petrie did not mince matters and in his report candidly admitted such contagion. I know from personal intimate contact with the peasantry that their kinsmen in the army were being duly impregnated with the 'poison of disloyalty' and this was our main plank of approach to the Jats. The soldiers and policemen were recruited from the rural area and while on duty kept scrupulously segregated from outside influence but when on leave among their kinsmen and neighbours, they came in live-contact with the 'germs of disloyalty' and carried those germs to their Units.

"The only defect in Mr. Petrie's report is the inherent obsession of the British rulers that the rural areas and the landed aristocracy must be loyal to the core and should not think of Britishers ever leaving the Indian shores. These were the two pillars of strength to the rulers. That is why Mr. Petrie does not hesitate to cast doubts on the loyalty of the saviours of Sikhism like Bhai Vir Singh, Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, S. Joginder Singh and such other stalwarts. These dignitaries were incapable of duplicity. Their sole concern was the rejuvenation of the Sikhs who were either relapsing in the old fold of superstition, magic and charms or were being drawn into Christianity through government patronage and missionary activities.

"The only sin that these giants among the then Sikhs committed was to infuse a fresh breath of life into the decaying Sikhs of Guru Nanak and the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh. They were honest, and frank champions of the Sikhs and succeeded in arresting the decay that was being fostered by the inroads of Christianity. Mr. Petrie has portrayed some of the activities of some other leaders who were according to him dreaming of the restoration of the so-called Sikh supremacy in the Punjab.

"Taking the entire perspective of the period 1900—11 into consideration, Mr. Petrie collected material to offer it as a warning to the government and based his thesis on the dictum :

"either you are with us or you are against us, there is no half-way house." He sought to bring staunch Sikh reformers like Sunder Singh Majithia, Bhai Vir Singh and others into the unsavoury category of incipient agitators; there is nothing to be wondered at.

"In any case the report is of great historic importance for lapses caused by his outlook on the problem of maintaining the stability of the British empire.

"I met Bhai Vir Singh several times at Dehra Dun. He left on my mind the happy impression of a great soul. His personality radiated sweet, gentle and uplifting influence. He was known to me as a friend and benefactor of Prof. Puran Singh, Dr. Khuda Dad, and as the elder brother of Dr. Balbir Singh. As I came to know, Bhai Vir Singh started his career as a writer and the editor of a weekly paper. His writings produced a stupendous effect on the Sikh Public.

"Bhai Vir Singh's association with S. Sunder Singh Majithia and S. Trilochan Singh resulted in the coming into existence of the Chief Khalsa Diwan. Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia was a leader of great calibre. All his colleagues and workers in the Diwan were imbued with the ambition of regenerating the Sikh masses and restoring the original purity of their great religion. Their work in the field of education produced a tremendous impact. All this great activity was being watched by the British Government with a degree of obsession reflected in the report of Mr. D. Petrie, which otherwise is a document of great historic value summing up the disturbed conditions that existed in the Punjab during the period.

—J. M. Chatterji."

## INTRODUCTION

After the decline of the Moghuls, Punjab saw a number of invasions from the North West which laid this part of India into a land full of turmoil with the resultant deterioration in the economic condition of the people. In this chaotic condition there came on the scene the powerful personality of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who knit Punjab into a strong unit and his empire extended right upto the borders of Afghanistan in the West, and of China and Tibet in the North. The rule of the Maharaja was benevolent and all the people of his domain received justice at his hands irrespective of caste, creed or religion. At the same time the British were consolidating their position in the rest of India and the East India Company held sway upto the borders of the region ruled by the Maharaja. That the British held the Sikhs in high esteem is evident from the treaty of peace and friendship signed at Ropar between the Maharaja on the one hand and the East India Company headed by Lord William Bentinck on the other.

Even in those days the British were casting their greedy eyes on the Punjab but were kept at bay by our Maharaja by his sagacious use of diplomacy and tact. As soon as the Maharaja closed his eye the British succeeded in

creating dissensions in the Sikh aristocracy and the machinations resulted in the creation of Kashmir under the Dogras and the annexation of the Punjab. Although the Sikh leaders were banished from the Punjab yet the feelings of these people were far from being assuaged. Thus the British were constantly on the look-out for any united effort by the Sikhs to come to the fore on the one hand and on the other winning them over by giving grants to some and employing others in the Army, and thus keep Punjab under subjugation.

This report of Mr. D. Petrie clearly shows the working of the mind of the Britishers during the last three decades of the last century and the first twelve years of the present. It brings out clearly how by patronising the Khalsa Diwan of Lahore under the leadership of Bhai Jawahar Singh and others and of running down the group led by the late Dr. Sardar Sir Sunder Singh ji Majithia on the other, resulting in the bifurcation of this body and the formation of the Chief Khalsa Diwan at Amritsar with Sardar Sir Sundar Singh Majithia as Secretary and Bhai Arjan Singh of Bagrian with the patronage of the Maharaja of Nabha, as President. From this period onwards the report is closely linked with the Chief Khalsa Diwan, the Khalsa College at Amritsar, the Educational movement and the religious renaissance of the Sikhs. It was the result of the educational movement of the Sikhs led by Sardar Sir Sundar Singh Majithia with the active support of Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh ji, Sardar Harbans Singh ji of Attari, the direct descendent of the famous S. Sham Singh of the First Sikh War with the British, S. Tarlochan Singh ji and Sardar Sir Jeggendra Singh ji of Rasulpur, that the Sikhs again were united and became a force to be reckoned with. It was this movement which awakened in the Sikhs the old

spirit of brotherhood and nationality, that resulted in the Akali movement which played an important part in the life of the Punjab and is still dominant in the Present truncated Punjab of India. It is with these words that I commend the valuable work done by S. Nahar Singh M. A. in bringing to light the report of Mr. D. Petrie to the people of Punjab in particular and of India in general.

**SURJIT SINGH MAJITHIA,**

President

**Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar,**



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1. To a correct understanding of the present nature and trend of Sikh political activities a brief consideration of the peculiar position occupied by Sikhism is not only relevant but even necessary. The Sikh religion was founded by Guru Nanak, the first of the ten Sikh Gurus, who was born<sup>1</sup> in the Sheikhpura district and flourished about 1500 A.D. Sikhism, like Buddhism, was inspired by a spirit of revolt against the ceremonial and social restrictions of the Hindu religion, as well as against the bigotry and arrogance of its hereditary priesthood, the Brahmans. The religion of Nanak was essentially quiescent and non-aggressive. He taught that there was one God, who was neither the God of the Hindus nor of the Mahomedans, but was the God of the Universe, and that all men were equal in his sight. He rejected the authority of the Brahmans, their incantations and sacrifices, holding that salvation was to be obtained by uprightness and purity of life rather than by a rigid, pharisaical observance of unintelligible and superstitious rites. The doctrine of Nanak

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<sup>1</sup> At Talwandi Bular of the Bhatti Musalman Clan in 1469 A. D. Baisakh Sudi 3, the place known as Nankana Sahib is at present in the Sheikhpura district West Pakistan.

was thus in many respects essentially unlike the teachings of the tenth and last Sikh Guru, Govind Singh.

2. Nanak died in 1539 and was succeeded by Angad, the second Guru. The new religion ran an uneventful course until the succession of the fifth Guru, Arjun, who attained the spiritual leadership of the Sikhs in 1581. Arjun first gave the Sikhs their scriptures in the shape of the *Adi Granth*<sup>2</sup>, and also a common rallying point in Amritsar, which he made his religious centre. He also was the first to introduce a regular organisation of the Sikhs by reducing their voluntary contributions to a systematic levy. Though a man of eminent piety, Arjun was also a dabbler in politics, and, having embroiled himself with the Emperor Jehangir, he was summoned to Lahore where a rigorous imprisonment hastened, if it did not actually cause, his death.<sup>3</sup> The arrest of Arjun inaugurated that Mahomedan persecution which was the turning point in Sikh history, and from that time onward Sikhism was perpetually in conflict with the Islamic power and

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<sup>2</sup> *The Adi Granth Sahib was compiled by the fifth Guru. It was completed and canonized by the Guru as a holy book of the Nanak Panthies, being worthy of worship, reverence and respect. It was installed as a holy book in the "All sides open and all people open" Golden Temple Amritsar by Guru Arjan Dev Ji on 15th December 1604 or Bhodon Sudi Ekam 1661 Samvat Bikromi. The oldest Sikh divine living at that time Boba Budha Ji by name was appointed its chief reader or Granthi "or Custodian of the Granth" by the Guru himself.*

<sup>3</sup> *Guru Arjan Dev ji breathed his last on 12th June 1606 A.D. after undergoing tortures according to the Mongol code of punishment, by the orders of the Mughol Emperor Jahangir. The code did not allow the spilling of blood out of the bodies of holy men at the time of their execution. Hence other methods such as beating to death with hummers, or by drowning in a river or stream or boiling a person in a big cauldron full of water were employed to destroy holy men.*

(Tuzok-i-Jahangiri)

religion. Har Govind, the successor of Arjun, was a warrior and political leader. He fought against the Mughal authorities as well as the Hindu Kardars or officials of the Mughal governors. As his forays were against the Mahomedan rulers, the Guru came to be regarded as a champion by the down-trodden Hindus, while his camp grew to be the rallying-point of free-lancers and adventurers. The policy of Har Govind was continued by his two successors and under Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, the Sikhs, while consistently growing in power, were considered by the Mughal rulers as disturbers of the peace, and constituting a menace to the prosperity of the country. After the inevitable conflict with the Islamic troops Tegh Bahadur, as an infidel, and a rebel, was executed at Delhi by the Moghul authorities. Guru Tegh Bahadur had appointed his son, Govind Rai, as his successor and having enjoined on him the necessity and the merit of revenge.

3. Govind Rai was only 15 years of age at the time of his father's death and for some years subsequently he appears to have remained inactive, brooding over his future course and devising measures for the accomplishment of his mission against the Mahomedans. Emerging from his retirement he preached the doctrine of the Khalsa, the faith of the 'pure', the 'elect'. Admission to this sect was gained by the baptismal ceremony of the *pahul* and its military nature was marked by the bestowal of the title of Singh or 'lion' on all who entered it. In addition to the wearing of the five Ks., which are the outward and visible symbols of Sikhism, the Guru taught his followers that they must practice arms and never show their backs to the foe in battle. He preached the democratic doctrine of equality with even less reservation than Nanak himself, and enjoined on his Sikhs that they were to consider themselves members of one family and that previous distinctions were erased. But religious fervour was entirely eclipsed by military zeal, and thus "a religion became a political power, and for the first time in India a nation arose, embracing all races, all classes, and all grades of society and

handed them together in face of a foreign foe.”<sup>4</sup> (Ibbetson).

4. The life of Govind Singh, as he must now be called, is an almost unbroken record of petty wars, sometimes with the Rajput Hill Chiefs but more often with the Mahomedans. Being eventually defeated he was compelled to flee the country, most of his family and entourage having been either slain in battle or put to death by their conquerors. Gohind Singh; who died in 1708. was the last, as he was the greatest Guru of the Sikhs, and though he did not live to see his ends accomplished, he had effectually aroused the spirit of his people and left on it the impress of his own military ambition. After his death his feud with the Moghuls was conducted for some time by one of his disciples named Banda, who met with some temporary success but was eventually defeated and put to death by torture. Thereafter there ensued a period of terrible and sanguinary persecution, but, with the gradual breaking up of the Moghul power, the Sikhs revived and banding themselves together, soon overran the whole plain country in the Punjab. By the beginning of the 19th century the various Sikh Confederacies were united under Ranjit Singh who pushed his conquest as far as Kangra and Kashmir. The history of the Punjab under Ranjit Singh is too well-known to need recapitulation, and it is also unnecessary to allude to the sequence of events which resulted in the Sikh power being brought into contact with and humbled by the British.

5. After the conquest of the Punjab, the popularity of Sikhism began sensibly to wane. The Sikh, though born of a Sikh father, is not counted a Sikh until he has received the baptism of the *Pahul*, and the supply of candidates for baptism is .

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<sup>4</sup> Mr. R.C. Temple. Secretary to the chief Commissioner Punjab in his letter dated 18th Sept. 1854 to the Government of India observed as follows. “If Nanak was the first religious teacher, Govind was the first political teacher of the Sikh faith. He established a Theocratic polity, and founded the famous Khalsa, “one of the strongest and most vigorous sect (religious order) that ever arose in India.”

apt to vary directly with the popular estimate of the advantages to be derived from joining the community. From the time of Guru Govind Singh onwards and especially during the period of Ranjit Singh's reign, spiritual fervour, national pride and anti-Islamic fanaticism operated powerfully to swell the numbers of those who embraced the Sikh faith. With the annexation of the Punjab Sikhism lost much of its old popularity and its members, uncertain of the attitude of their new masters, refrained from bringing up their sons for baptism. The Mutiny, in which it identified the Sikhs with the suppression of a movement having as its ostensible object the restoration of the Mahomedan power, produced an immediate revival, and the name of Sikh once again became a title of honour and the door to military service and honourable advancement. On the conclusion of the Mutiny & with the disappearance of the wars and tumults which had fostered the growth of Sikhism, reaction again became visible.<sup>5</sup> The younger generations began to find the restrictions imposed by their religion irksome, and there were no longer raids, looting or reprisals to compensate for the austerities entailed by the observance of religious formalities. As a natural consequence, the Centre of Sikh faith, became the personal properties of the *Mahants* of the Udasi sect. The preaching of The Khalsa faith altogether stopped, with the result, that there has been a considerable relapse of Sikhism into the Hinduism from which it sprung. By the

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<sup>5</sup> *The British adopted a very strict and rigid policy detrimental to the growth of Sikhism. After annexation, The Golden Temple Amritsar, alongwith 6 other gurdwaras and The Gurdwara at Taran Taran were practically controlled by the British authorities through a Manager of these gurdwaras appointed by The British Government. The Wogf Act of 1861 gave the Control and Manogement of the holy places of the Hindus and Muslims to the Communities concerned but in the case of the Sikh Gurdwaras, The Act was not applied on political grounds. The properties of the Sikh places of worship were transferred and given over to the Udasi Mahants and others, throughout the Punjab.*

performance of a few expiatory rites, the payment of a certain sum of money to Brahmans, and the disuse of the military surname, the Sikh reverts to an Arora or Khatri shopkeeper and a Jat peasant into the ordinary Hindu community.

6. But it must not be imagined that the decay of Sikhism is purely fortuitous or dependent on mere circumstances. Hinduism has always been hostile to Sikhism whose Gurus powerfully and successfully attacked the principle of caste which is the foundation on which the whole fabric of the Brahminical religion has been reared. The activities of Hindus have, therefore, been constantly directed to the undermining of Sikhism, both by preventing the children of Sikh fathers from taking the *Pahul* and by seducing professed Sikhs from their allegiance to their faith. Hinduism has strangled Buddhism, once a formidable rival to it, and it has already made serious inroads on the domains of Sikhism. The movement to declare the Sikhs, Hindus, though widespread and of long duration, is, according to Mecaulliffe, "in direct opposition to the teaching of the Gurus." Nevertheless it incidentally receives support from certain of those who profess themselves Sikhs. Besides the Singhs or followers of the tenth Guru, there is the important class of Nanakpanthi or Sahijdbari Sikhs, who, while following the faith of Nanak, have not thought it incumbent on them to adopt the ceremonial and social observances of Govind Singh, who do not observe the five Ks. and who do not even in theory, reject the authority of the Brahmans.

Again many Sodhi and Bedi Sikhs have never been able to bring themselves to resign the quasi-sacerdotal position and privileges which attach to them as members of the class, (Khatris), which gave the Sikhs most of their Gurus. and has given them a priesthood also in so far as the Sikhs can be said to have one. Such spiritual leaders number among their followers not only Sahijdharies & Singhs indiscriminately, but also many pure Hindus some of whom, apparently out of deference to the religious tenets of their leaders, wear their hair long and outwardly appear to be Sikhs, though they cannot be classed with any precision either as Sikhs or as Hindus. There is thus a consideration in the body of

Sikhs, between whom and Hindus the dividing line is far from clearly demarcated, and who, if they have not actually accepted, have never been at any pains to repudiate, the contention that the Sikhs are part and parcel of the Hindu nation. As lastly as October 1910, Baba Gurbakhsh Singh Bedi, of Kallar, Rawalpindi, was prevailed upon to accept the office of President of the second Hindu Conference at Multan, an organisation which is controlled by a purely Hindu agency, and which has for one of its avowed objects the drawing together of the different component elements of the Hindu nation; and of these elements it claims Sikhism to be one. The Baba is a professed Sikh, yet from the presidential chair he made a public pronouncement to the effect that Sikhs and Hindus were one and the same and that the Sikhs were merely a section of the Hindu nation. The Baba was severely taken to task by many Singh Sabhas all over the country, which are supported chiefly by such Sikhs as adhere to the faith and ceremonial of the tenth Guru, and who maintain that the Sikhs are a distinct nation from the Hindus; but the disintegrating effect of such a pronouncement cannot be overlooked. Hinduism, owing to its wonderfully assimilative character, has thus re-absorbed a good part of Sikhism, as it has absorbed Buddhism, before it, notwithstanding that much of these religions is opposed to caste and the supremacy of the Brahmans. More recently, the militant Hindu sect known as the Arya Samaj, has not been content, like orthodox Hinduism, to trust to the slow process of time, but has carried war into the Sikh domains by "reclaiming certain low-classes who are socially inferior to the rank and file of the Khalsas, but who are unquestionably outcastes and untouchables according to the caste classification of the Hindu scriptures or Shastras.

7. It thus becomes clear that there are in the Sikh community two sections which are pulling in totally different directions. The first of these sections is that which favours, or at any rate views with indifference, the re-absorption of the Sikhs into Hinduism, and which has the powerful support of the Hindu community, both orthodox and progressive. The second is that

which maintains that there is a distant line of cleavage between Hinduism and Sikhism and devotes itself to maintaining the Sikh faith in its original purity. This latter party has the support of the best authorities in claiming that it is the champion of orthodoxy, and it has set itself jealously to watch and oppose Hindu, and more particularly Arya aggression.

8. In spite of the efforts of the orthodox Sikh party to prevent abuses from creeping into their religion, it is doubtful whether many of the so-called "orthodox" Sikhs of the present day are entitled to call themselves such, if judged strictly by the articles of faith of the tenth Guru. The Sikh Gurus attacked caste distinctions and the authority of the priesthood. "Orthodox" Sikhs, however, still refuse to mingle with "Mazhabis", "Ramdasias" and other low classes who are theoretically their social equals. Again they are brought into the world, married and buried by Brahmans whose authority and influence their Gurus are at one in repudiating; and they flock in thousands to Hardwar and other Hindu places of pilgrimage though this is repugnant to all the teachings of their scriptures. The ritual of the Golden Temple is considerably tinged with Hinduism and idolatrous practice, and it is not going too far to say that the impress of Hinduism will be found to be borne by the faith of all who are popularly regarded as "orthodox" Sikhs at the present time, whether in the Army or out of it. This is a fact that must be kept clearly in mind when we come later to examine the position of the Tat Khalsa party (on its new or political sense) which claims that it alone should be regarded as the embodiment of Sikh orthodoxy at the present time, and which is the chief factor in what is known as "the Sikh revival."

9. It has already been seen how the teachings of Govind Singh sufficed to weld the members of a quiescent religious order into a warlike and politically ambitious nation. The peculiar value of the Sikh faith in imbuing its followers with a military spirit is generally admitted, and the history of the Sikh Mazhabi regiments conclusively proves that the teachings of the Guru have



had the magical effect of transforming even pariahs and outcasts through an interminable line of heredity into brave and staunch soldiers. The soldierly qualities of the Sikhs have been fittingly recognised in the extent to which they have been employed in the Indian Army, in which at present they number roughly 33 thousand out of 174 thousand or somewhat less than one-fifth of the total strength. At the present time one of the principal agencies for the preservation of the Sikh religion has been the practice of military officers commanding Sikh regiments to send Sikh recruits to receive baptism according to the rites prescribed by Guru Govind Singh. Sikh soldiers, too, are required to adhere rigidly to Sikh customs and ceremonial and every endeavour has been made to preserve them from the contagion of idolatry. Sikhs in the Indian Army have been studiously "nationalised" or encouraged to regard themselves as a totally distinct and separate nation. Their national pride has been fostered by every available means and the Granth Sahib or Sikh scriptures are saluted by British officers of Sikh regiments. The reason of this policy is not far to seek. With his relapse into Hinduism and re-adoption of its superstitious and vicious social customs, it is notorious that the Sikh loses much of his martial instincts and greatly deteriorates as a fighting soldier. The fundamental principle of Sikh religion, the monotheism, the absence of superstition and restraint in the matter of food, are the factors which have made the Sikhs among the bravest soldiers. In describing the pernicious effects of the upbringing of Sikh youths in a Hindu atmosphere, Macauliffe writes: "such youths are ignorant of the Sikh religion and contract exclusive social customs and prejudices. It will thus be seen that the policy pursued in the Indian Army has been directed, and rightly directed, to the maintenance of the Sikh faith in its pristine purity, for the reason that any falling off from orthodoxy detracts from the fighting value of the Sikh soldiers. The good services of the Army in buttressing the crumbling edifice of the Sikh religion have been freely acknowledged by orthodox Sikhs, and it will now be necessary to consider the institutions the Sikhs themselves have established in their endeavours to

maintain their separate national individuality.

10. The first Singh Sabha or society was established at Amritsar in 1873. Owing to its President and Secretary having tried to secure absolute control of the society, the more disinterested members broke away and established another Singh Sabha in Lahore. The objects of the Lahore branch were to interpret more truly the teachings of the Adi Granth and other sacred books, and to demolish false doctrines and improper customs, which may be said to be the avowed objects of the Sikh Sabbas everywhere. The Lahore Sabha grew and prospered and in 1881 it rendered assistance to Government in the census, which was duly acknowledged. In the same year Sir Robert Egerton, the then Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, accepted the office of Patron of the Lahore Sabha, an honour which has been shown it by every successive Lieutenant-Governor. In 1883 the Amritsar Sabha, which had suffered considerably from the secession of the founders of the Lahore branch, was re-established, and several Sabhas having sprung up, it was deemed advisable to have a central controlling body. In pursuance of this object the *Khalsa Diwan* was founded at Amritsar in 1883, but no rules were drawn up for the conduct of business and the Lahore Sabha refused to acknowledge it until this was done. The Khalsa Diwan at the time of its founding embraced some 36 or 37 Singh Sabhas. At a meeting of the Khalsa Diwan held in Amritsar in 1883 Baba Khem Singh of Kallar, father of the Baba Gurbakhsb Singh mentioned in paragraph 7 and President of the newly formed Diwan, proposed that the title of the Singh Sabhas be changed to Sikh Singh Sabhas, the object being to include his Sahijdhari Sikh and Hindu following; but in the following April the proposal was negatived. The Raja of Faridkot had meanwhile agreed to become Patron of the Khalsa Diwan, and at a meeting held in October 1884 a set of draft rules and regulations for the conduct of business, framed by Bhai Gurmukh Singh, was brought up for discussion. This Gurmukh Singh was a teacher in the Oriental College at Lahore and became Chief Secretary of the Khalsa Diwan. The newly constituted body was

far from making an auspicious start, and it was torn from the very beginning of its existence by internal wranglings and dissensions. The Raja of Faridkot seemed to desire permanent temporal power over the Diwan and endeavoured to bring all the Sikh societies under his control; while Baba Khem Singh wished his authority to be regarded as paramount and absolute in religious matters and himself to be looked upon as the fifteenth Guru in succession from Nanak. The Raja and the Baba, annoyed to find that their desires were not met by the majority of the members, resolved to work together and for some time took it upon themselves to speak and act on behalf of the Sikh community. Further complications ensued when Bhai Gurmukh Singh wished to exclude from the Khalsa Diwan one Bawa Nihal Singh who had written an offensive book entitled *Khurshaid-i-Khalsa*, which dealt in an objectionable manner with the British occupation of the Punjab. Little would be gained by following the subsequent quarrels and bickerings but Nihal Singh, though he had the support of both the Raja of Faridkot and Baba Khem Singh, was eventually expelled by Gurmukh Singh, whom the Raja and the Baba managed to exclude in turn. The quarrel resulted in the splitting up of the Diwan into two sections known as the Lahore and Amritsar parties. The former was headed by Bhai Gurmukh Singh and had the support of the great majority of the Singh Sabhas of the Province, as well as comprising among its members the younger, better educated and more progressive members of the Sikh community. The Amritsar party was headed by the Raja of Faridkot and Baba Khem Singh, supported by the Amritsar, Faridkot and Rawalpindi sabhas.

11. From the year 1887 onwards the Lahore and Amritsar Dewans existed as separate and distinct societies, neither of them being able to claim to represent the Sikhs as a body. The Raja of Faridkot's party had a greater command of money and enjoyed several traditional advantages from the relationships which existed between it and certain notables who flourished in the days of Ranjit Singh; on the other hand the Lahore party was larger in point of members and stronger as regards educational attainments

and general ability. The Lahore Diwan may thus be regarded as the real Sikh representative body of the time, and as such it presented several addresses to various Viceroy's and high officials on behalf of the whole Sikh community. Its leading spirits were Bhai Gurmukh Singh, already mentioned, and Bhai Jowahir Singh of the North Western Railway Manager's Office and the energy of these two men seems to have made the Lahore Diwan the dominating factor in contemporary political and religious movements among the Sikhs. It was owing to the exertions of the Lahore Diwan that the long discussed scheme for a Sikh national educational institution at length took practical shape in the founding at Amritsar in 1892 of the Khalsa College, the objects and history of which it will presently be necessary to allude to in greater detail. During the earlier years of its existence the Khalsa College was managed by an Executive Committee drawn from its Council, of which body Bhai Jowahir Singh was Secretary; but after the death of Gurmukh Singh, Jowahir Singh seems to have been unable to retain his hold on the post, which passed into the hands of Sunder Singh Majithia of Amritsar. Sunder Singh had likewise gained the favour of the Raja Hira Singh of Nabha and Sir Attar Singh of Bhadaur, both of whom had previously supported the Lahore Diwan. With the loss of its leaders the Lahore party seems to have gone steadily down-hill and the power and influence to have centered more and more in the Amritsar party controlled by Sardar Sunder Singh. The Sikhs generally, too, were coming to recognise that their communal interests were but little advanced by dissension and disunion. Accordingly at a special meeting of the Amritsar Singh Sabha, which was held in November 1901 and attended by influential Sikhs from all over the Punjab, it was decided that the Amritsar Branch was in future to be considered the ruling one in the Society and that leading Sikhs from Amritsar and elsewhere be invited to join; it was further decided to consult with the Lahore branch and make known the results in the following February. The result of this meeting was the Chief Khalsa Diwan which was founded at Amritsar in 1902, and of which the first Secretary was Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia and the first

president Bhai Arjan Singh of Bhagrian, Ludhiana. The ostensible objects of the Diwan are religious and secular instruction, the reformation and improvement of the Sikh community and the representation of its needs to Government. In pursuance of these objects it supports an orphanage, a Khalsa Tract Society, an Updeshak Vidyalaya or preachers' school, and also maintains a regular staff of paid itinerant preachers. The Chief Khalsa Diwan is thus a sort of central controlling Agency for the management of the numerous Sabhas which exist all over the country wherever there is a large body of Sikhs. Its influence is considerable in all regiments of the Indian army which enlist Sikhs and such regiments are visited from time to time by the Diwan's Updeshaks. It is thus not only the self-constituted leader and spokesman of the Sikh in all social and political matters, but also it is able, through its organisation of preachers, to wield in spiritual matters a degree of influence which should not properly pertain to it. The supporters of the Chief Khalsa Diwan form essentially what is dubbed by Hindus the "Separatist" party among the Sikhs; that is, they dissociate Sikhs from Hindus, discourage the employment of Brahmans at Sikh social and religious ceremonies, and generally endeavour to keep their religion pure from the braidom and grossness of Hinduism and its priesthood. In so far as they serve to arrest the decay of orthodox Sikhism the objects of the Chief Khalsa Diwan are in every way commendable; but latterly, as will presently appear, the zeal of the Diwan for the cause of Sikh Nationality has outrun its discretion and led it to embark on a programme of social and religious reform which is acceptable neither to Sikh laymen of the orthodox school nor to the religious authorities at the Amritsar Golden Temple.

12. The same instinct of communal self-preservation, which led orthodox Sikhs to establish Singh Sabhas and Khalsa Diwans, was responsible also for the foundation of the Sikh National Educational institution known as the Khalsa College. The Sikhs have long been alive to the fact that not only are they backward in education as a community but also that their youth, if left to be reared by teachers of other denominations, are exposed to many

influences which are hostile to their traditional habits and character. The Khalsa College was thus founded not more with the idea of making good educational deficiencies than of ensuring that Sikh youths should be reared in a genuinely Sikh atmosphere and receive such moral and religious instructions as would mould them into true Sikhs. Efforts were made to establish a college as far back as 1883, but proved abortive owing to friction among the workers. At length in 1889 the Lahore Khalsa Diwan managed to achieve some appreciable progress and in the following year the movement was handed over to a body of gentlemen headed by Colonel Holroyd and Mr. Bell, afterwards Director of Public Instruction, Punjab. The scheme was warmly supported by authorities and subscriptions were received from the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief, and the then Lieutenant-Governor, Sir James Lyall; Lord Lansdowne moreover accepted the patronship of the Institution. Permission was also accorded to the collection of voluntary subscriptions from Sikh regiments. The original donations by the help of which the College was started amounted to five and a half lakhs of rupees, of which more than four and a half lakhs were subscribed by the Chiefs and people of the various Sikh States. The foundation-stone was laid by Sir James Lyall in March 1892, and the newly founded College was managed by the Council, which was the supreme controlling body. This Committee was found by experience to be too cumbrous for successful working and was eventually replaced by a smaller Managing Committee of 19 members. Later the financial position of the College became very insecure and, in order to place it on a proper footing, a special effort was made at the instance of the Punjab Government, in the spring of 1904, with the result that further donations were made including some 13 or 14 lakhs from the States and half a lakh from Government. With the help of these resources the number of students was largely increased and plans were started for considerable improvements and extensions of the buildings and the staff. In February 1907 the College was inspected by a Committee appointed by the Punjab University and as a result was called on to rectify certain defects in its internal administration and financial

status, under pain of disaffiliation. In the meantime the students were guilty of two separate demonstrations of rudeness and hostility towards two European Officers who had occasion to visit the College. Strong representations were received by Government from the Sikh States, asking it to intervene and put an end to the flagrant mismanagement which had been shown to exist. The result was the withdrawal by the States of payment of the interest of their promised donations. The President, Mr. Rattigan, resigned his post, and it became clear that if the contributions of the States were to be retained and the College was to be placed on a proper footing administratively and financially, a considerable change in its management would have to be effected. The whole question was considered by a small Committee appointed by Government and eventually in 1908 the old regime was abolished and some element of Government control was introduced into the management of the institution. The new Council is composed of 58 members, of whom 26 are drawn from British Districts, 25 from the Sikh States, 5 are Government nominees and 2 are elected by Sikh Graduates. The Government nominees are (1) the Commissioner of the Lahore Division; (2) the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar; (3) the Director of Public Instructions, Punjab; (4) the Political Agent, Phulkian States; and (5) the Principal of Khalsa College. The management of the College and its property is vested in a Management Committee composed of 15 members, of whom 6 are elected by the States, 6 by British Districts and 3 are Government nominees. The last-named members of the Managing Committee are the Commissioner of Lahore, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar and the Director of Public Instructions, the two first mentioned being responsible for respectively Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Commissioner is also President of the Council. The College receives from the Punjab Government an annual grant of Rs. 10,000 for five years commencing from 1908, on condition that the status and the constitution of the managing bodies are maintained in accordance with the wishes of Government.

Whatever improvements the presence of British officials in its managing body may have effected in the administration of the Khalsa College, the tone of the institution has if anything deteriorated since the change was effected. It will be necessary later on to discuss the tone of the College at some length, as the tone of a purely Sikh institution largely under Sikh management must necessarily be to some extent a reflexion of the mental attitude of the particular body of Sikhs who are associated in its control.

13. The present political activity discernible among the Sikhs is the resultant of forces some of which are purely political or purely religious, while others do not fall wholly within the domain either of politics or religion but are as it were an admixture of both. The purely religious forces at work among the Sikhs which affect them as a separate community have already been described; and it will now be necessary to allude to some of the political or politico-religious movements which have influenced the Sikhs in common with the other sections of the Indian population.

The loyalty of the Sikhs is traditional and the tradition rests on the substantial basis of a long and honourable record of loyal and devoted service rendered to the Crown in peace as well as in war. There is in fact among British Officers as a very general disposition to suppose that loyalty is inherent in the Sikh, and that it is an attribute of him which can be as always safely assumed to be above suspicion. Nevertheless a perusal of past records proves conclusively that the Sikhs have all along had among their ranks a leavening of disaffected and even actively disloyal persons. The fanatical Kuka sect among the Sikhs was overtly hostile to the British supremacy and had to be put down with a strong hand.<sup>1</sup> In the early eighties the rumoured advent

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<sup>1</sup> *The Kuka or Namdhari seet was founded by Gooroo Ram Singh Ji, at village Bhaini in the Ludhiana district in the year 1857. The religio-social aim of the seet was the revival*

*(Continue at the next page)*



of Dalip Singh in India had a decidedly unsettling effect on a large section of the Sikhs among whom hopes ran high of again seeing their rule established in the Punjab. Of this statement there is ample concrete evidence to be found among contemporary records, — books, hand-bills, and speeches; there is also the fact that a village in the Lahore District refused to pay, its land revenue, saying that tribute was due only to their King who was shortly to arrive in India. The expulsion from the Khalsa Diwan of the author of the admittedly objectionable work, the *Khurshaid-i-Khalsa* (see paragraph 10), was opposed by no less influential Sikhs than the Raja of Faridkot and Baba Khem Singh. This work appeared about 1885 and there is evidence on record to show that in two regiments enlisting Sikhs subscriptions were collected to aid the bringing out of a second edition. Bearing these facts in mind, as also the remarkable advance of Indian political life and thought during the subsequent twenty years, it is in no wise surprising that the Sikhs did not remain unaffected by the wave of disloyal unrest which swept over the Punjab in 1907.

The notorious agitator, Ajit Singh, was a Jat Sikh of the Jullunder District, and the many inflammatory speeches which he delivered were listened to by, among others, large numbers

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(continue from page 22)

*of Sikh practices and rites as taught by the tenth Guru. The political aim consisted in the restoration of the Khalsa Raj in the Punjab by the expulsion of the Malechch Frangi rulers by all the means necessary for the attainment of this object. The British authorities blew 67 Kuka prisoners by guns on 17th and 18th January, 1872 at Maler Kotla. The founder and 11 Kuka leaders were deported and confined as state prisoners under Bengal Regulation III of 1818, in different Jails.*

of Sikhs.<sup>1</sup> After his deportation there were discovered in circulation Gurmukhi letters expressing sympathy with the agitator. Sikh sepoys were observed among some of the audiences gathered at various political meetings held by Ajit Singh or others of his followers, and it is known that one or two Sikh soldiers actively participated in the agitation. A Sikh barrister was one of the principal accused in the Rawalpindi riots case. Again when Mr. Gokhale visited the Punjab in the spring of 1907, he associated with, and was feted by, various persons in Lahore whose names were certainly not then synonymous with loyalty or good-will towards Government. When he visited the Khalsa College, apparently on the invitation of some of the staff, the horses were taken out of his carriage by the students who dragged it to the College; and finally he lectured in the College dharamsala from which the Granth Sahib was specially removed to make room for him. The Khalsa Advocate newspaper of Amritsar, which is the organ of the Chief Khalsa Diwan and the recognised mouth-piece of the educated Sikhs, took to publishing extracts from the seditious Gaelic American newspaper and had to be warned for reproducing in June 1907 an article likely to cause discontent among native sepoys and to rouse disaffection against Government. During the quieter years which have succeeded 1907 there is ample evidence, apart from the conduct of the Chief Khalsa Diwan and Khalsa College which will be presently examined in detail, to prove that the embers of sedition are still smouldering in certain quarters. The objectionable Gurmukhi newspapers appeared during 1909, one the *Prem of*

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<sup>1</sup> *Sufi Amba Parshad, a Kaysath by birth and a resident of U P. came to the Punjab by the year 1905 and met Sardars Kishan Singh, Swaran Singh and Ajit Singh in their village in the Lyallpur district. He believed in revolutionary measures for the attainment of political freedom. A society known as the 'Anjamaan-i-Muhibban-Watan' or Society of the Lovers of Motherland was formed with the three brothers as active members.*

*Ferozepur*<sup>1</sup> and the other the *Sacha Dhandora of Lyallpur*. Both these prints were largely echoes of the violently nationalistic writings which were then appearing in the Punjab press and which culminated in a series of press prosecutions during 1909-10. They have now ceased to appear. More-over the Editor of the *Prem* commenced to render into Gurmukhi a series of the seditious books and pamphlets which emanated from Ajit Singh and the *Bharat Mata gang of Lahore*. One pamphlet was actually published but the author was there-upon called on to deliver up all copies in his possession under pain of prosecution. From America<sup>2</sup> it has been reported that several ex-sepoys have publicly burnt their medals and discharge certificates, and as the report appeared in a nationalist paper there is no reason to suppose that their conduct has been misrepresented. There is also sufficient evidence available to prove that a spirit of anti-British disaffection is commonly prevalent among Sikhs in Canada. A young Sikh barrister of Amritsar, Harnam Singh of a good family, was a prominent inmate of the India House in London. He was expelled from Cirencester Agricultural College for wearing a mutiny hodge in memory of the "Martyrs" of 1857 which he refused to remove at the request of the Principal; he was eventually called to the Bar in England but the Punjab Chief Court has, on a consideration of his past history, refused to allow him to practise as an advocate. In 1910 a sowar of a certain Indian Cavalry regiment was dismissed from service for subs-

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<sup>1</sup> *Both the papers were started and run by the members of the Anjuman-i-Muhiban-Watan.*

<sup>2</sup> *"In the early twenties many hundred Sikh soldiers serving in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Malaya states left service and went to America to better their prospects in life." Their example was soon followed by their relatives serving in the Indian Army. Many of them too left service and went to America and Canada and worked there as agriculturists and labourers in the manufacturing concerns."*

cribing to the *Swarajya Newspaper*<sup>1</sup> of Allahabad, a journal of which no fewer than four editors have been convicted for publishing seditious matter. Finally an impasse was reached in Patiala affairs in October 1910 which resulted in the summary dismissal, under the orders of His Excellency the Viceroy, of both the *Prime Minister* and the *Commander-in-Chief*. Not only were the activities of these officials and their following inimical to the interests of the Patiala State as such, but there was also clearly traceable in them a distinct under current of disloyalty to the British Government.

It has been considered necessary to quote such incidents in some detail in order to show clearly that the Sikhs have not been, and are not, immune from the disloyal forces which have been at work among other sections of the population. It is possible, or indeed probable, that some of the persons mentioned in the many reports, which are on record regarding the 1907 agitation, have not been implicated in seditious doings at all, or that they have been so concerned to a less degree than is indicated. Still, allowing a certain discount for errors and exaggerations, there remains a preponderating weight of evidence, which can neither be disregarded nor explained away, to show that certain portions of the Sikh community have not escaped the contagion of disloyalty. The contention that some of them are disloyal is in no wise meant to impugn the loyalty of all Sikhs, but it is essential to realise that an anti-British spirit is abroad in certain quarters and is a factor which must be taken into account in deciding from what standpoint certain present-day Sikh movements should be viewed.

14. Another influence which has powerfully affected the character and trend of Sikh political activities is what, for want of a better name, may be termed the *depressed classes movement*. According to the teachings of the tenth Guru, all Sikhs are, strictly

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<sup>1</sup> "This newspaper was run by the members of the *Anjuman-i-Muhibban-i-Watan*".

speaking, socially equal after baptism and there are none of the caste distinctions which are so characteristic a feature of the Hindu society. But Sikhism is only one of the many religions in which practice has overridden precept, and the Jat Sikh has never been able entirely to divest himself of the caste prejudices which pertained to him as a Hindu or to regard as his social equals his co-religionists recruited from classes of lower social standing than his own. This attitude accounts for the existence of the Mazhabis, Ramdasias, Rehtias, Rangretas and other classes of Sikhs, with whom the general body of the Khalsa neither interdine nor intermarry and whom they regard in much the same light as Hindus view the lower strata of their society. These low-classes Sikhs have never had any attractions held out to them by orthodox Hinduism by which they would be assigned, if anything a still lower social position; on the other hand proselytising religions like Christianity and Islam have secured some converts from among them, though such small defections as have occurred never seem to have caused much anxiety to the Sikhs. With the advent of Arya Samajism this attitude of indifference has had to be abandoned. The Samaj, theoretically at any rate, admits all religions and all classes on terms of social equality and its attractions for low caste Hindus and Sikhs are therefore peculiarly strong. Between Arya Samajism and Sikhs there are strong points of resemblance, leaving aside the abstention from tobacco and the wearing of the 5 ks., which are inculcated by Sikhism and which are at the best superficial and artificial differences. Moreover the most rigid observance of the religion and rites of the tenth Guru have never given the low-class Sikh the social equality which the Arya religion professes to confer on him immediately on conversion. As a natural consequence many low class Sikhs who have been 'reclaimed' by the Samaj, have been shaved in public and have publicly abjured the outward and visible signs of their former faith. The success which has attended the proselytising activities of the militant Arya sect has greatly disquietened the Sikhs and for a considerable number of years back

the more advanced and liberal-minded among them have recognised that a rigid observance of caste barriers must result in the gradual atrophy of the outlying portions of their social system. It is only within the last few years, however, that the admission of low-castes though long regarded as desirable, has actually taken place to any appreciable extent. During 1907 there was founded in Amritsar a society known as the Khalsa Biradari which has as its object the levelling up of class distinctions in the way of inter-dining and inter-marrying and which advocates the reception into the sikh brotherhood of all persons of whatever class who were previously included in Sikhism. In September 1907 it was said that 60 persons were members but that 700 more were prepared to join. The actual promoters were persons of no great position or influence, but they had behind them the moral support of such men as Sunder Singh Majithia and Mehr Singh Chawla of Lahore. From Lyallpur it was reported that Mazhabis and Jats were beginning to dine together and a preacher of the society, a Khatri Sikh of Lahore named Ranbir Singh, married a Mazhabi widow, a daughter of a retired Subedar in the Lyallpur Colony. The society as such has seemingly never wielded much influence but the impetus given by it to the proselytising movement has remained, and the reclamation and admission on terms of equality of low-class Sikhs is now the avowed policy of the *Chief Khalsa Diwan*. Accordingly when it was announced that an Arya Samaj meeting was to be held at Jullundur in August 1909 for the reclamation of Ramdasias and other low-class Sikhs, the Chief Khalsa Diwan issued a vigorous appeal asking its supporters to rally strong at Jullundur to save their brethren from the clutches of the Samaj. Arya and Sikh meetings were held the same day, the Chief Khalsa Diwan party outbidding the Aryas by formally receiving their low-caste brethren into the fold of Sikhism and eating food at their hands. Resolutions were passed advocating the more general admission of low-castes and asking lambardars and zaildars actively to interest themselves to the question. Among the persons who attended and took part in the proceedings were Sunder Singh Majithia, Kunwar Daljit Singh

of Jullundur, Bhai Takhat Singh of Ferozepore and Rai Bahadur Sadhu Singh, a pensioned Forest official of Amritsar, and Parduman Singh, a pleader of Jullundur. The leaders of the Chief Khalsa Diwan have thus not only actively assisted in the reclamation of low caste Sikhs on a specific occasion but have deliberately adopted it as their policy for the future.

15. Though probably originally aiming at nothing more than social and religious improvement, the depressed classes movement has come to have at least as great a political as either a social or religious significance. There, the Arya Samaj is frankly devoted to producing a homogeneous national body and as Christianity and Islam, in theory at least, subscribe to the doctrine of social equality, orthodox Hinduism and Sikhism have been compelled, to some extent to keep pace with the more progressive religions or to witness a constant shrinkage of their numbers. Recent events in India, too, if they have brought into existence the idea of a united Indian Nation, have also done much to accentuate the lines of cleavage between the different communities. More especially is this true of the Reform Scheme, which has driven home the lesson that representation, and consequently power are in direct proportion to numerical strength. There has been a great awakening of inter-communal jealousy and there is no community that is not fired with the idea of consolidating and improving itself to the utmost of its power. Losses in numerical strength are no longer regarded with indifference. Prior to the taking of the last census a proposal was put forward to class as non-Hindus certain of the depressed classes who hover on the confines of Hinduism rather than live within its pale, though they have heretofore been enumerated as Hindus. The proposal as emanating from Government may have been primarily dictated by considerations of ethnological exactitude, but the question was also mooted by the Muslim League which desired merely to strike a blow at the political power of the Hindus by detaching from them a very considerable body of people which had been previously regarded as an integral part of the Hindu nation. The Hindus, though immeasurably

superior in numbers to other races in India, took serious alarm at the proposal and opposed it tooth and nail. The idea was ultimately abandoned, but the whole incident aptly illustrates the totally changed standpoint from which the raising of the depressed classes has come to be regarded. The amelioration of the lot of the depressed classes has ceased to supply the entire motive power, and they are regarded as much a political asset which must be retained and developed at all costs as a fit object for the exercise of missionary or philanthropic efforts. The problem of raising their depressed classes has thus in spite of themselves, been obtruded on the Sikhs and they have been driven to choose between closing up their ranks or seeing the outlying portions of their social system gradually fall into the hands of the enemy. The choice of the former alternative was almost inevitable and it has been adopted. In so far as the movement tends to consolidate the Sikh nation and to enable it to present a solid form to external aggression, it must command the most unqualified approval, for it has already been shown that Government cannot view with indifference the disappearance of the Sikhs as a distinct nationality. But among the Sikhs, as among the Hindus, religion is indissolubly bound up with the social system and a relaxation of social rules is bound to have a disturbing effect on religious beliefs: such a disturbance has, as a matter of fact, been clearly visible in the case of those Sikhs who have subscribed to the reform movement and this falling away from orthodoxy has again altered the political outlook of those who have been affected by it. These various changes are all accurately reflected in the *Tat Khalsa*.

16. The tenth Guru Govind Singh appointed none as his spiritual successor, except the Granth Sahib or Sikh scriptures. In various temporary matters he commissioned a certain one of his disciples named Banda as a leader to take the revenge from the killers of his innocent younger sons by the Mughal rulers at Sirbind in 1704. This person, meeting with some degree of initial success in his encounters with the Moghul arms became megalomaniac and was led to put forward claims to the guruship



as well, with the result that the Sikhs of that time split up into two parties, one of them obeying the behests of their late Guru and the other supporting the pretensions of Banda. The former were known as the *Tat* (the real or true) Khalsa, and the other as the Bandai Khalsa. In later times the term Tat Khalsa has been applied by Hindus to what they are pleased to call the "separatist" party among the Sikhs, and every orthodox Sikh, if questioned, would claim with pride that he belongs to the Tat or true Khalsa. But just as the term Swaraj, which originally meant colonial self-government for India within the empire, has come to denote complete national autonomy, so the expression Tat Khalsa, from meaning the orthodox Sikhs generally, has come to be applied to the advanced Sikh reforming party which is not merely not *orthodox* in its religion but seems to be in some danger of falling away from Sikhism altogether. It is in this sense that the expression will be used throughout the following pages.

Though Guru Govind Singh advocated the admission of all castes on a footing of perfect social equality after they had received the *Pahul* it seems quite clear that even in his time the Hindu Jat, who embraced Sikhism, never actually did accept as his social equals his co-religionists who had been received in to the Khalsa from a lower social level than his own. The mere existence of the lower classes of Sikhs such as Mazhabis and others affords practical proof of this, and between them and the Jat Sikhs, as well as Brahman and Khatri Sikhs, there have always existed clearly defined social distinctions. Inter-marrying and inter-dining among the higher and lower classes though theoretically permitted and even inculcated, have been as little practised as within the orthodox Hindu community itself. Consequently, when in pursuance of the policy of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, its leaders began to receive as social equals and to eat with low-caste Sikhs, they at once found themselves in collision with the religious authorities of the Amritsar Golden Temple and the Sikh hierarchy controlling the different *dharmshalas* and *gurudwaras* (Sikh temples) all over the country.

Pujaris began to refuse them admission to places of worship and to reject their offerings. When at the third Sikh Educational Conference held at Amritsar in 1910, it was proposed that the procession should proceed from the Railway Station to the Golden Temple, the religious authorities made a vigorous protest to the Deputy Commissioner, because the Conference leaders were practically the same persons who had attended the Jullundur meeting in August 1909 and had eaten at the hands of the "converted" Ramdasias and Rehtias. The emeute which seemed imminent was averted by the train being late and the procession proceeded direct to the Khalsa College. The rupture between the reforming or Tat Khalsa party and the Golden Temple is now complete, but the Tat Khalsa party have come forward to contend that their reforming activities are justified by their scriptures and that they, and not the adherents of the religion of the Golden Temple, are entitled to claim to be Tat or true Sikhs. It seems fairly free from doubt that, considering the strong taint of Hinduism that permeates present-day Sikhism, the Tat Khalsa party have the weight of the teachings of the tenth Guru behind them in claiming to be Tat or true Sikhs; still their indiscriminate and reckless proselytising is a thing so far unknown in Sikh history, and they are prepared to receive direct into the fold of Sikhism, Musalmans and other non-Hindus with far less scruple than was shown even by the tenth Guru himself. The Sikh body politic is thus bound to receive accretions which are Sikh neither by tradition nor sentiment, but even if it be admitted that authority for the unquestioning absorption of all and sundry into Sikhism is to be found in Sikh Holy Writ. There is another aspect of the Tat Khalsa movement which must give rise to more serious misgiving. With their anxiety to swell the numbers of the Sikh community, it would also have manifested itself. It is notorious, however, that all available evidence points to a directly contrary conclusion. The Tat Khalsa party have turned their back on their priesthood because of their difference of opinion on the depressed classes movement, and they have ceased to attend at places of worship and to participate in the

religious observances enjoined by their religion.<sup>1</sup> So far as is known they have made no efforts to establish gurudwaras which would be administered by priests of their own ways of thinking, but they seem on the other hand to have developed an almost complete indifference to *their religion* and its attendant rites and ceremonies. The freedom of thought and laxity of observance displayed by the Tat Khalsa are looked upon with something like dismay by orthodox Sikhs, and the new party appears to be drifting more and more in the direction of Arya Samajism, with great proselytising zeal but an exceedingly scanty leavening of genuine religion. A union between the two is by no means unthinkable, though at present Sikh "nationalism" is a word that is much in the mouth of the Tat Khalsa party and they greatly resent shaving in public of Sikh converts to Aryaism. Still the two religions are in their general nature closely akin, and they are at one on the politico-religious question of kine-killing; in fact the chief essential difference is the adherence on the part of the Tat Sikh to the outward and visible signs of his religion and his abstention from tobacco; but these points are exceedingly superficial and the Tat Sikh, from the very nature of the movement, tends to evince a lessening degree of respect for such usages. The obstacles to union are, therefore, far from insurmountable.

On the face of it there appears to be but little to urge against the Tat Khalsa creed. There are no doubt among its followers a number of zealous Sikhs who desire nothing more than the homogeneity of the Sikh body politic and the protection of it from any risk of further disintegration. Such men are probably free from racial bias and political ambition. Still the Sikhs at present are unexceedingly important military asset and any luke-warmness they may develop in attachment and loyalty

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<sup>1</sup> *As practised by the hereditary Pujaries running the Sikh temples under the directions of the Manager or Sarbrah appointed by the British Government since the annexation of the Punjab in 1849.*

to the British rulers of the country must give rise to some misgiving; and this anxiety is in no wise allayed when it is remembered that the new Sikhism appears to be modelling itself more and more closely on the Arya Samaj, which is admittedly not only a religion but a policy and aims at creating not only a Vedic Church but an Aryan Nation. Again the Tat Khalsa must be judged largely by the direction taken by the activities of its leaders, and the general nature of these activities has been far from reassuring. If the whole of the adherents of the Tat Khalsa are not political minded, there are assuredly many members of it who are imbued with nationalistic ideals. These enthusiasts aim not merely at forming a homogeneous Sikh community which will be able to defend itself against other rival bodies, but preach the revival of a *Sikh nation* which will wrest the sceptre from the hands of the British and again establish its rule in the *Punjab*. This party is what may more properly be called the neo-Sikh party, the activities of which have recently been considerably in evidence.

17 The leading centre of Tat Khalsaism is the Chief Khalsa Diwan. It would be wrong to suppose that every member of the Chief Khalsa Diwan is of Tat Khalsa sympathies, but the management of its affairs has fallen so entirely into Tat Khalsa hands and the Tat Khalsa party is so paramount in its councils that for practical purposes it may be regarded as almost a purely Tat Khalsa institution. If Tat Khalsaism and neo-Sikhism are to be distinguished, it may be said that the Tat Khalsa have at heart the consolidation of the Sikhs purely with the view of enabling them to maintain a separate communal existence, while the neo-Sikh party aims at nothing short of the formation of a Sikh nation and the re-establishment of Sikh rule in the *Punjab*. How many adherents of the Tat Khalsa there are who do not also subscribe to neo-Sikhism, it is extremely hard to estimate. Opinions elicited in many quarters tend to show that the non-political element in the Tat Khalsa party is small and unimportant; and seems almost as if the adoption of the Tat Khalsa principles tended to become the first step towards the assimilation of the

political doctrines of neo-Sikhism. It is needless to say that the Chief Khalsa Diwan is not openly neo-Sikh, and evidence of the existence of the neo-Sikh party must therefore be looked for in the activities of the agents and institutions controlled by it. Many orthodox Sikhs do not hesitate to dub the Chief Khalsa Diwan and the Tat Khalsa party thoroughly disloyal bodies, but considering the present enmity that exists between the Diwan and the Golden Temple management body it would be manifestly unfair to accept this estimate without independent corroborative evidence.

18. The Chief Khalsa Diwan keeps a staff of paid preachers or updeshtaks who stamp the country and lecture on various topics—social, educational, religious, political; and more often than not all four are inextricably intermingled, as for instance when it is argued that vicious social customs and neglect of religion and education are the direct causes of the alleged political down-fall of the Sikh nation. There is, therefore, no guarantee that at a meeting held ostensibly in connection with any one of these subjects all of them will not in turn come under discussion. Such indeed is generally the case and at the many religious and educational meetings (or diwans as they are often called) held by the Chief Khalsa Diwan's agents the cloven hoof of politics has too frequently been shown. It has so far been considered politic to accept such meetings at their organisers' estimate, and to regard them as well-affected and conceived purely in a spirit of sectarian progress. Less of the proceedings has thus been reported than it is desirable that Government should know, but there is sufficient evidence to warrant the statement that much recklessly loose talk is indulged in and that a good deal of it is calculated to engender a spirit of open hostility to Government. Most of these updeshtaks or strolling preachers put it forward as an axiom that never has the Sikh nation fallen so low or been in so wretched a plight as at present; never, it is argued, has education been so backward, temporal resources so straitened and disease and poverty so rampant. It is true that these manifold ills are not invariably laid at the door of the British Government though they

are frequently so, but it is difficult to dissociate the idea of the responsibility of the paramount power from the deplorable state of affairs that is depicted as existing under its rule. References are made to the past glories of the Sikh nation and Sikh rule, and there is a tendency to compare their present degraded condition to the hardship and oppressions practised on the Sikhs under Moghul rule. A similarity in effects, it is argued, must be due to a similarity in causes; the Sikhs were wretched and down-trodden in Moghul times because of Moghul cruelty and oppression; present day conditions are therefore ascribable to similar tyrannies on the part of the British. In the tenth Guru's time freedom and national power were obtained by unity and by valour on the field of battle; cannot present-day Sikhs, it is asked, free themselves and raise themselves by resort to similar means. And so on and so forth. In many of these lectures Sikh national and religious traditions are cunningly prostituted to inflame the martial instincts of the Sikhs and to encourage the idea that if the Sikhs were to combine they could successfully revolt. The history of the Sikh religion is the history of the Sikh nation, and it is easy to see on what grounds the Tat Khalsa have not only not openly discarded a faith which no longer appeals to them but have rather chosen to pose as the only true followers of a religion through which they can still address a powerful appeal to Sikh national pride. The following is from a speech delivered by one Jagat Singh, updeshak of Lyallpur, in November 1909—"Agriculturists are neither well-treated nor helped by any one. On the contrary their blood is being squeezed out of them. The Government is contemplating the recovery of Rs. 52,00,000 which were spent on famine relief, from the agriculturists along-with the land revenue assessment. Can there be any more injustice than this? They should combine and act together or otherwise Government will impoverish them to that extent that they will not be able to get up from their heds. If they will combine and spit in one place many persons will be drowned in their saliva. That is the blessing of concord and unity." Again Harhans Singh of Attari, when showing and explaining a number of politico-religious

magic lantern pictures, predicted to his audience : "Guru Gobind Singh will again come into the world, and shall fight with the foreigners and save his people." Similarly at a Khalsa Diwan meeting in the Amritsar District, held in May 1910, Labh Singh, updeshak, urged the people "to unite and sacrifice their lives as did the Gurus." So at a Diwan held at Verka, Amritsar, Harnam Singh of Batala deplored the fallen condition of the Khalsa and the enmity of Government; foes, he added, were to be overcome by bravery and the sword as in days of old. And yet again a female Sikh preacher, (Bibi Ram Kaur,) speaking at the annual meeting of the Kobat Singh Sabha, addressed an audience of Sikh women in the Dharamsala, telling them not to teach their children English or to allow them to enter Government service : "They should be taught national professions and Gurmukhi, so that they can read from the Granth. The Christians, like Aurangzeb are destroying the Sikh religion."

Such instances could be greatly multiplied. If a concrete example of the use of violent or disloyal language on the part of a particular preacher were brought to the notice of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, they would no doubt disclaim responsibility for his words and say that they are working purely for the conservation of the Sikh nation, which is admittedly in danger of disappearing; and that in such a case the preacher had spoken without their authority. It would be difficult to find a weak spot in this defence, but the Chief Khalsa Diwan leaders are perfectly aware of what is being done. They constantly appear at these meetings and listen to these speeches, yet the speakers are never pulled up or rebuked; the Diwan leaders, if taxed, would repudiate the views expressed, while they are prepared to profit by and use to their own ends the spirit of anti-British disaffection, that is so instilled into the minds of the people. It would be highly inadvisable to believe in tow the numerous reports that have been received regarding the seditious character of the speeches and proceedings at these meetings. No doubt many are entirely false and many more must be heavily discounted. Still, unless we can assume collusion between several mutually unknown

reporting agencies, the conclusion is irresistible that much license of speech and thought is habitually indulged in. It is impossible to avoid the inference that there are very frequent references to oppression, freedom by the sword, national unity, sacrifice of life for the nation, and so forth, and it is equally impossible to imagine how such matters can be brought into any practical relation with questions of purely social, religious or educational reform.

The disquieting impression, which a study of the procedure at these meetings must produce, is not removed by the perusal of a good deal of what has appeared in print; and here at least we are on safer ground than mere hearsay evidence. Mention has already been made of the nationalistic organs the *Prem* and the *Sacha Dhandora*,<sup>2</sup> both of which are now defunct. The following is from the latter paper and appeared in its issue of the 22nd September 1909 in relation to the subject of "Coercive policy in India." The article runs: "This short sketches show that the Gurus and their Sikhs acting on the motto of 'without fear, without animosity' had adopted the policy of loving every one and did not take up arms even when their heads were cut off; but when it came to the protection of religion and the defenceless poor, they took it upon themselves to fight for them. This policy, which was troublesome to themselves and not to any one else, was adopted by them simply to put a stop to oppression. They made people not to pay land revenue to the rulers and cheerfully bore its consequences. This went on for a long time and at last the tyrants had to get the reward of their ill-deeds. This has happened in many places and at many times; wherever and whenever tyranny and injustice prevail the leaders gave their lives to stop it, and if that could not stop it, the others put a stop to it by the force of arms. These examples of our Gurus show us what should be our fixed programme." In 1909 there appeared a pamphlet entitled "Ki, Khalsa Kalaj Sikhan da hai?" which was written by Master Sundar Singh of the Khalsa School,

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<sup>2</sup> of the *Anjuman-Muhibban-Watan*.



Lyallpur. It has already been shown that Government's interference in Khalsa College affairs in 1903 was mainly instrumental in saving that institution from utter extinction. (In fact, the Government was alarmed at the growth of national feelings among its students and hence the management was taken over by the Government, *Nahar Singh*.) Though Government has not only saved but subsidised the College, its action has been most ungratefully misrepresented and shamelessly distorted by some of the more zealous members of the Sikh national party, who have alleged that the intervention of Government has robbed the college of its purely national characteristics and so aimed a blow at the distinct nationality of the Sikhs. In Sundar Singh's pamphlet many of these mischievous representations have taken concrete shape. He accused the British Government of having robbed the Sikhs of their College, just as they had by gross breach of faith previously swallowed up the Punjab. The language used was in many places rabidly intemperate: "God forbid that ever through the influence of our foes the college is abolished or by the assistance of the mischievous men of the nation it turns into a Government institution." The author attacked with equal vehemence Sirdar Sundar Singh Majithia, whom he denounced as a traitor for having brooked Government interference; "it was merely under the pretence of supervision that the British Government took possession of the Punjab." The pamphlet in many places unquestionably amounted to seditious libel of Government, it was published by the aid of money collected from Sikhs and was circulated extensively among the civil population as well as in the Army. The work cannot be proved to represent the sentiments of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, in that it virulently attacked Sundar Singh Majithia, the leader of the body who was prominently connected with the reconstitution of the College Committee in 1903. It is not certain, however, how far Government intervention commanded itself to such Sikhs as Sundar Singh Majithia; though outwardly it was accepted with but little protest, there is reason to believe that inwardly it was keenly resented; men in Sundar Singh's position cannot afford openly to associate themselves with the opinions and language

of the pamphlet, and the Chief Khalsa Diwan leaders would repudiate both the pamphlet and its writer. Still the circulation of the pamphlet proves beyond doubt the anti-British spirit which animates a section of the members of the Diwan, who by virtue of their lower position can disregard the circumspection which the leaders of the body are compelled to observe in their conduct and utterances. The following is from a leaflet entitled "Sachhi Yadgar" (True Memorial) which appeared about January 1911: "We should try to make a brave and victorious nation out of the dead and thus save the country from being carried away by the flood which has now invaded it. The country has suffered many vicissitudes which the pen finds it difficult to enumerate. The Sikhs have been watching many anxious nights so that this burden may be lifted up from the country. What Guru Govind Singh's sword did with Aurangzeb you should also do to-day, Say, why are you frightened? You have neither house nor power nor strength. Even your religion is paying impost. A thick and dark cloud of tyranny has spread over the country." The leaflet is a glorification of the tenth Guru, whose teaching the Chief Khalsa Diwan more particularly affects, and it is highly coloured with the military characteristics of the Khalsa religion. Another pamphlet entitled "Sikh Vidya Utte Lekh," which was distributed gratis at the Sikh Educational Conference held at Amritsar in 1910, describes the fallen condition of the Sikhs and preaches unity and secular and religious education as the only means by which the Sikhs can again rise; but the author pronounces definitely against English education and implies that it opposed to the teachings of Guru Nanak. There are several other publications which are of a very similar nature, but which have not been subjected to a detailed examination.

Besides the printed matter which has been alluded to above, a certain further amount of concrete and tangible evidence of the existence of the neo-Sikh movement is to be found in a series of pictorial broad-sheets which appeared mostly in 1910 and which are believed to be the handiwork of Jagat Singh,

Updeshak of Lyallpur. These dealt with a variety of subjects, female education, lives of the Sikh saints, etc., and the meaning is conveyed by closely grouped masses of woodcuts mostly representing scenes of a historical or allegorical nature and often in themselves free from any objection. But in one sheet dealing with female education, which represented a Sikh heroine well-known in history grafting a tree which was flowering with the past great doings of the Sikhs and their Gurus, there was introduced at the top : "He is only to be known as brave who fights for the cause of his religion; who, though cut to pieces, does not leave the field."; and near it a wood-cut of the globe being borne away on the Wings of a bird, with inscription, "The rulers of the Kalyug (present age) are butchers, and Dharm (religion, justice) has taken wings and flown away." The second quotation is from Guru Nanak's Majh Ki War, describing the state of India at the time of Babar when cruelties were being practised on the Hindus, not Sikhs, and the stanza goes on : "In this completely dark night of falsehood the moon of truth is never seen to rise.....How shall deliverance be obtained?" In close juxta-position there is a picture representing the ninth Guru in a cage and an early Sikh martyr having his head sawn asunder. The pictures seem to suggest the means of deliverance taught by Govind Singh, namely the sword, and valour on the field of battle. It is difficult otherwise to conceive the appropriateness of quotations applicable to an age when there were tyrannous rulers against whom the sword was the only remedy, unless the intention is to convey the impression that British rule is equally galling and oppressive and demands the use of similar remedies. Other instances could be adduced. The purport is not by any means always clear and it is greatly obscured by the bewildering variety of wood-cuts. Still, without any undue straining, it is always possible to put upon these sheets the nationalistic construction which their author obviously intended them to bear. A Sikh officer appraised the picture which has been described in detail as exceedingly clever in that the various appeals were all quotations

from the scriptures, but the object of putting them in was, he considered, to inflame the military pride of the Sikhs. In all these pictures the Sikh religious and martial traditions have been cleverly prostituted, and it is the little by-pictures and quotations, which really give savour to the whole issue. The intention of them all seems to be the same, namely to create disaffection and suggest an historical remedy for bad times. Reports have been received which narrate that these broad-sheets have as a matter of fact been shown to school-boys and others for the purpose of inculcating the lessons of the present wretched plight of the Sikh nation and the need of unity and reform.

Finally, there is the conduct of the Chief Khalsa Diwan leaders. Sunder Singh Majithia and others, who are the controlling centre of the body, are constantly in the company of such persons as Jagat Singh, updeshak, *the author of the pictures*, and other preachers who are responsible for the type of speeches and writings which have been described. Sunder Singh's constant companions are such men as Tillockan Singh, Pleader, Vir Singh, of the Khalsa Samachar newspaper, Jadh Singh of the Khalsa College, and others. The disloyalty of these men is notorious, and is admitted on all hands. Yet they tour the country with the Diwan leaders, and when Sirdar Sunder Singh's son was married they were honoured guests at the wedding. When the Commissioner of Lahore, who is President of the Khalsa college Council and Managing Committee, was in Amritsar early in 1910, Sirdar Sunder Singh did not come to see him for six days, and then left a card followed by a letter saying that urgent business had called him away from Amritsar. The Commissioner held a durbar, but not a single neo-Sikh attended. Their absence provoked considerable comment among the orthodox Sikhs, as did previously the scant ceremony shown to the Deputy Commissioner when he attended one day the Educational Conference held at Amritsar in 1910.

19. The cumulative effect of these different items of evidence is very great, even if any one of them be held to be

inconclusive or worthless in itself. A study of the present condition of internal affairs in the Khalsa College is also exceedingly instructive as that institution is the child of the Chief Khalsa Diwan and, being largely controlled by it, can therefore be regarded as a more or less accurate reflection of outside and inside thought and movements.

The origin and early history of the Khalsa College have already been briefly narrated in paragraph 12, where it has also been stated that the students in 1907 were guilty of demonstrations of rudeness and anti-British hostility against two European officers—one civil and one military—who visited the College on two separate occasions. In paragraph 13, too, mention has been made of Mr. Gokhale's visit to the College at a time when his presence in the Punjab was welcomed chiefly by the members of the more advanced political party and accorded a most enthusiastic reception by the students who unyoked the horses and dragged his carriage to the College where the Granth Sahib was specially removed from the gurudwara to enable him to lecture; the sacred Nishan Sahib (or Sikh emblem of victory) is also said on high authority to have been taken from the temple and carried in front of Mr. Gokhale's carriage. When a deadlock in the College affairs was reached in 1907-08, the Sikh States, in inviting Government's intervention, expressed themselves in terms of unqualified disapproval of the tone and management of the institution. In 1908 the Tikka Sahib of Nabha, writing to the Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government, was disposed to fear that the old objectionable element, which had brought the College to grief, had still too strong a voice in the reconstituted Council; he mentioned Sirdar Sunder Singh Majithia (the former and the present Secretary), Dharam Singh, an Engineer who was employed on the building work of the College but had to be got rid of, Harbans Singh of Itari, and Trilochan Singh, Pleader, as men who cherished anti-Government views and had engineered the anti-British demonstrations and the visit of Mr. Gokhale. Inside the College, the Tikka Sahib said, they were supported by professors of the type of Jodh Singh and Nihal Singh

and he had grave apprehensions that unless these malcontents were dissociated from the management, things would gradually drift back into their old unsatisfactory condition. The Tikka Sahib's fears have been more than realised. It would be tedious even to summarise the numerous reports regarding the openly seditious lectures addressed to the Students by such teachers as Jodh Singh, Nihal Singh, Sunder Singh, Narayan Singh, Hari Singh Chima, Jagan Nath and others. Such reports no doubt contain the usual elements of falsehood and exaggeration, yet Colonel Parsons, Commissioner of Lahore and President of the College Managing Committee and Council, who devoted much time and anxious study to Khalsa College affairs on the spot, gave it as his deliberate opinion that seditious talk was undoubtedly indulged in between masters of the type of Jodh Singh and disaffected visitors, and that senior students were admitted to these talks. It is beyond all question that such objectionable characters as Harnam Singh, the Barrister of India House fame, Harbans Singh of Itari, Jagat Singh, the Layallpur updeshak, and others are allowed free access to the College and students; and the usual subjects of talk on such occasions are again unity, sacrifice for the nation, the degraded state of the Sikhs, and the various other shibboleths of the political propaganda being pushed outside. There is no doubt whatever what numbers of Jagat Singh's pictorial broad-sheets were received and circulated in the College, and that the students have witnessed exhibitions of magic lantern pictures framed on similar lines with similar objects. It is believed that seditious literature is received in the College from abroad and the circulation of the violently nationalistic "*Free Hindustan*"<sup>1</sup> was on one occasion proved. A Sikh named Luchman Singh, who was hanged at Gujranwala in 1909 for murdering another Sikh who had embraced Muhammadanism, has been canonised as a "Shuhid" or martyr, and his photograph in his cell is another of those that have been shown to Khalsa College students as representing a type of Sikh whom they should strive to emulate.

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<sup>1</sup> *An anti-British Rule paper published in the U.S.A.*

This picture was actually seen by the European Government Inspector of Schools when he paid a surprise visit to the Khalsa College School in July 1910. The Inspector also found a teacher pouring over Macauliffe's History of the Sikhs when an arithmetic lesson should have been in progress, and he gleaned a general impression of great slackness and lack of efficient supervision. As lately as the middle of March 1911 insulting notices, attacking the newly appointed Principal, were posted on the College walls and on the doors of the Principal's house. All this evidence, some of it hearsay but some of it to be readily explained away, leads one to form an impression of the general tone and loyalty of the College which coincides in a remarkable degree with the opinions entertained by local officers who have based their conclusions on first-hand knowledge and personal observation. But if more evidence be needed, orthodox Sikhs themselves regard the type of education imparted at the College with the greatest misgivings. They complain that the College turns out boys with a marked political bias, and that this bias is distinctly not favourable to the British Government. Soon after the Amritsar Educational Conference of 1910 a young student of the College, a nephew of a prominent Sikh Gentleman of Amritsar and a "volunteer" at the Conference, was taken ill and died. The sentiments expressed by the lad before he died amazed his uncle, a man of sterling loyalty. The lad said: "I am not afraid to die. All life is sacrifice. If I had been allowed to live I might have done great things by sacrifice. Until the nation realises that lives must be sacrificed, it will never come to any thing," or words to that effect. The uncle had not the slightest doubt that the laying down of life in the boy's thoughts was sacrifice not for Government but against it. Similarly a Subedar complained to the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar that a Khalsa College student of the B A. class had been openly advising people in his village not to serve the British Government and that several would-be recruits had in consequence cried off.

It seems, in fact, to admit of no doubt that in the College young students are systematically tampered with and seduced

from their loyalty to Government. Sirdar Sunder Singh is Secretary of the Managing Committee, and as such he is largely responsible for the actual every-day control of the College. Trilochan Singh and Vir Singh, both zealous neo-Sikhs, are on the Council, the former being also on the Committee. The College staff are intimately associated with these men, and the College is at present run by them to the almost complete exclusion of other influence. The present condition of the College, therefore, affords striking evidence as to the true nature of the underlying ideals of the neo-Sikhs propaganda.

20. The Sikh Educational Conference is, as its name implies, a body of Sikhs which is devoted to the promotion and encouragement of education among its co-religionists. The Conference was founded in 1908 when it met at Gujranwala and landed property worth one lakh of rupees was made over to it by Sirdar Balwant Singh Butalia. Subsequent annual meetings were held at Lahore in 1909, at Amritsar in 1910, while the fourth and most recent meeting of the Conference took place at Rawalpindi in April 1911. The reasons which led to the founding of the Sikh Educational Conference are not clearly known. It has been alleged that the prime mover was the Tikka Sahib of Nabha, who during his membership of the Viceroy's Council came under the influence of Bengali and Maratha leaders and was prevailed upon by them to start the Conference to make good the educational deficiencies of the Sikhs and so bring about their political awakening. Again it has been alleged that the Conference was founded by the Chief Khalsa Diwan, which, resenting Government's interference in Khalsa College affairs in 1908, resolved to build a new Sikh College independent of Government control, and devised in the Conference a means of collecting funds for this object. Yet a further explanation put forward is that it was started by the malcontents among the Sikhs, so that by appearing to go one step better even than Government in the matter of Sikh education, they should gain the good-will and support of the masses. Any or all of these causes may have been contributory in some degree, but it is doubtful whether any



one of them in itself is sufficient to account for the existence of the Conference. It has already been remarked that the happenings of the past few years have served greatly to intensify the fierceness of inter-communal rivalry in India. There has been a corresponding quickening of interest in educational matters, education having come to be regarded as the most essential condition of communal and political advancement. These influences have been at work among the Sikhs as among others, and a realisation of the indispensability of education has been accompanied in their case by a growing consciousness of the educational backwardness which has hitherto characterised them as a community. Bearing these facts in mind, the circumstance of the founding of the Sikh Educational Conference need not be regarded as abnormal or unnatural or as requiring any extraordinary reasons to account for it. The movement has commanded the hearty support of all classes among the Sikhs, because the need of education is universal and generally recognized. The Conference, though it has as one of its objects to ameliorate and propagate Sikhism, is declared in the statement of aims and objects to be a non-political body. It is attended by delegates from different provinces who are elected by the different Khalsa Diwans and Singh Sabhas, or, failing such bodies, by general meetings of local Sikhs; also by delegates from Sikh Schools and Colleges.

Though the Sikh Educational Conference is thus a movement which in its ostensible aims and objects is above reproach and which should receive as indeed it does receive, the most hearty support of all classes of Sikhs, yet the fact that it has been originated, and is controlled by, the Chief Khalsa Diwan must give rise to some anxiety as to the direction its activities may eventually take. The exact position occupied by the Chief Khalsa Diwan in Sikh affairs has already been defined, and it has been shown that its present destinies are controlled by a party which is certainly religiously unorthodox and almost certainly politically ambitious. The activities of this party do not command the sympathies of many of the supporters of the Diwan

itself, that is of such orthodox Sikhs as have not embraced the Tat Khalsa doctrines—moral or financial—to those Sikhs who are disposed to make common cause with the Hindus. But the starting of the Educational Conference has altered all this. That the Sikhs are backward in education and that advancement is urgently needed are accepted as axiomatic truths by Sikhs of all shades of opinions who have, therefore, regarded the Conference as a cause in respect of which all sectarian differences may be sunk in furtherance of the common weal; they have given not only moral support but also financial assistance. The actual nature of the objects, however, to which these moneys subscribed in the name of education are to be devoted, rests within the decision of the Chief Khalsa Diwan. The question, therefore, briefly resolves itself into this—Has the Educational Conference been started strictly for educational purposes or in furtherance of political ambitions: and will the funds collected and entrusted to the Diwan be spent on education as such or for the promotion of the “national” objects which the Diwan has so greatly at heart? It is exceedingly hard to give a definite answer to these questions one way or the other; but an examination of what has so far been said and done at the various sessions of the Conference enables one to form at least an intelligent anticipation of the answer which time is likely to give. In spite of the avowal that one of the objects of the Conference is to assist and improve existing schools and colleges, it has so far, beyond the mere passing of resolutions, made no very marked efforts in this direction. It appears to have evinced little or no disposition to come forward as a co-adjutor of Government in educational matters or to supplement the educational work that is already being done under state auspices. There has rather been manifested a disposition to make out that so far nothing has been done for Sikh education at all, or that what has been done has been on utterly wrong lines, and that a fresh start must now be made. There has also been much talk of the need of “national” education and of the opening of Gurmukhi schools which would impart education on “national” lines. Thus at the third Sikh Educational Conference held at Amritsar in 1910, one of the

speakers was *Professor Jodh Singh of the Khalsa College* who had to be interrupted in a furore of seditious talk of which the burden was to condemn unsparingly Government service and the Government system of education; he said in conclusion that even a sweeper should be given the pahul, and that if the Sikhs were to unite and take the direction of their educational affairs into their own hands, the result would be "WAHGURU ji ka Khalsa te sri Wahguru ji ki Fateh" (the Sikh national greeting)—or, in other words, that the Sikhs would be all in all. At the same time the pamphlet "Sikh Vidya utte lekhh" was distributed among the assembly. This work has already been alluded to and its general purport was to prove that the Sikhs had done badly under the English system of education and that it was time they reverted to that prescribed by their Gurus. At the Rawalpindi Conference of 1911 the demand for "national" education took still more definite shape. The President, Sirdar Sunder Singh Majithia, appealed to the assembly of some 4,000 or 5,000 people to start a "Sikh National Educational Fund" for the establishment of elementary schools in towns and villages. The proposal was received by the large audience with the utmost enthusiasm and subscriptions were freely promised. Sirdar Joginder Singh, Home Minister of Patiala, promised Rs. 5,000; Sant Singh, his brother, Rs. 3,000; and Sirdar Sunder Singh Majithia, Rs. 3000. Sant Attar Singh, a distinguished Sikh spiritual leader and a man of markedly strong personality, promised to collect Rs. 5,000 from his disciples and Sirdar Joginder Singh said he would establish at Patiala a Committee which would form sub-committee, start schools in the villages and collect ten lakhs towards the Educational Fund. Professor Jodh Singh held that it was useless to ask for subscriptions; the first thing, he said, was to convert the people to Sikhism (by which he presumably meant the Tat Khalsa) and when they were Sikhs they would of their own accord give freely of their incomes. It is believed that so far a sum of Rs. 40,000 has been collected towards the National Educational Fund and that a lakh more has been promised.

So far as is known, nothing practical has yet been done in

pursuance of the objects for which the Fund was started and it must, therefore, be largely a matter of conjecture what shape the educational policy of the Chief Khalsa Diwan will eventually assume. It may be that the Diwan will increase its number of Updeshaks, or that it will provide duly qualified Gurmukhi teachers for village Dharamsalas. A recent report has it that the result will be to place in each village an agent of the Diwan, who will be primarily an instrument for the spread of the Tat Khalsa propaganda and afterwards a teacher. So much is certain that the acquisition and control of considerable sums of money will enable the Diwan greatly to extend its field of operations among the general Sikh community, and to elaborate and improve its existing machinery. The Diwan's educational activities will in any case require careful supervision. While it continues to cling to the present policy of its leaders, any considerable increase in the number of its paid preachers, if they are of the same kidney as some of its present employees, must necessarily be regarded with some suspicion. If, on the other hand, the Diwan decides to provide through proper teachers elementary education for the rising Sikh generation, the result may be a still more potential source of mischief, if not of active danger. For, by the Diwan's own showing, it has been driven to take the initiative in education because the present system is inherently hostile to the true interests of the Sikh nation; and it is, therefore, to be presumed that the new educational policy will be directed to the inculcation of ideals which are at present neglected and to the evolution of a type of character which the existing regime has set itself to discourage.

21. During recent years the activities of the Chief Khalsa Diwan have not been confined purely to the Punjab. It has been devoting its energies to other provinces as well, in the matter of establishing Singh Sabhas and getting Sahijdhari Sikhs baptised as Singhs. There are now Singh Sabhas at such places as Larkana (Sindh), Shikarpur, Karachi, Poona, Sasaram (Bengal), Calcutta, Rangoon and elsewhere. Preachers visit these outlying parts and collect money for educational and other

purposes. The principal branches of the Diwan in the Punjab are ;—The Manjha Diwan at Tarn Taran; the Panch Khalsa Diwan in Patiala State; the Malwa Khalsa Diwan at Choochar Chak, Ferozapore District; and the Khalsa Doaba Diwan at Jullundur. Singh Sabhas exist in all towns and important villages in the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province, where there is any considerable body of Sikhs domiciled. The supporters of the Chief Diwan were believed to be about 10,000 in 1907. Their present number is said to exceed 20,000.

There is considerable section among the adherents of the Chief Khalsa Diwan which views its present management with dislike, not only because of the advanced character of its religious and political propaganda, but also because of the ascendancy which the Aroras have gained in its councils. The Arora Sikhs are recruited from socially inferior class of Khatris of the same name, who have always been notorious for the sharpness of their business instincts. At present Sirdar Sunder Singh, the Secretary of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, who is a man of admittedly weak and unstable character,<sup>1</sup> is largely in the hands of Trilochan Singh pleader, and Vir Singh, of the Khalsa Samachar newspaper, both of whom are Aroras by caste. There are persistent rumours that these men abuse their position and influence to secure their caste-fellows employment under the Diwan, and also to divert into their own pockets money which should be spent for the good of the society.<sup>2</sup> Most of the funds vested in the Diwan are kept in the Punjab and Sind Bank, an Amritsar institution

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<sup>1</sup> *Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia was the son of Raja Surat Singh Majithia, Belonging to a leading aristocratic family of the Punjab. He was supposed to have been a supporter of the British Government. On attaining majority he started acting in a manner offending to the British authorities. He was supposed to have started working in accordance with the advice and counsel of S. Tarlochan Singh and Bhai Vir Singh, and not listening to the suggestion of the British officers.*

<sup>2</sup> *Based on alleged rumours only without any foundation.*

which seems to be allied to the Chief Khalsa Diwan itself and of which Trilochan Singh is manager. These charges of mismanagement and misappropriation have so far been vague and have been expressions of suspicion rather than definite accusations; still they have emanated from many independent quarters and have already resulted in some unsettling of the confidence of its supporters in the bonafides of the Diwan's management.

Another cause which has shorn the Chief Khalsa Diwan of some of its prestige and influence was the starting in 1909 of a new body entitled the Central Khalsa Diwan. This society seems to owe its foundation to the jealousy existing between Sunder Singh Majithia and the Tikka Sahib of Nabha: The former had already incurred the dislike of the Sikh States owing to his conduct of Khalsa College affairs, and the feeling took a more personal character when in 1909 Sundar Singh was appointed to succeed the Tikka Sahib in the Viceregal Legislative Council, contrary to the latter's wishes. The influence of the Tikka Sahib appears to have been sufficient to induce a considerable body of its Malwa and Phulkian States supporters to sever their connection with the Chief Khalsa Diwan. The new Central Diwan had its headquarters at *Bagrian* in the Ludhiana District and its first president was Bhai Arjan Singh of that place; other office-bearers were Sirdar Gurdit Singh of Patiala, Vice-President; Bhagwan Singh of Patiala, Secretary; and Sodhi Sujan Singh and Uttam Singh both of Patiala, Joint-Secretaries. Little has been heard of the Central Diwan since its formation. Its real founder, the Tikka Sahib, has been abroad most of the time since its formation and he is still away. The office is said to have since been transferred to Patiala. What the future of the society will be, cannot be known until the return of the Tikka Sahib from Europe; but so far its formation does not appear to have impaired the Chief Khalsa Diwan's ability to conduct the Educational Conference or its other ordinary business; this year an important Patiala contingent headed by Sirdar Joginder Singh, Home Minister, was present at the Rawalpindi session. The movement is chiefly of interest as showing how Manjha-Malwa jealousy can still interfere with concerted action on the part of the Sikhs as a

community, as there are not known to be any fundamental political differences between the two bodies.

22. The position of the Sikh States in present day Sikh politics is somewhat outside the scope of this note, which has been based on information and observations which have relation, for the most part, purely to British territory. Nevertheless the Sikh States are an integral part of the Sikh nation, many of their members participate in Sikh movements originated outside them and many notable figures in Sikh politics, though dwelling in British limits, pay visits to the Sikhs States.

The Chief Khalsa Diwan and the Khalsa College have from their beginning belonged as much to the States as to British districts. It is true that the States have long been dissatisfied with the Khalsa College and wished to open a similar institution nearer their own territories, but this has been partly due to the fact that the College is situated in Manjha territory, benefits mostly Manjha youths, and, though started and supported largely by Malwa funds, is mainly under Manjha management. The Khalsa Diwan, until the Tikka Sabib's break with Sundar Singh, appears to have enjoyed the consistent support of its sympathisers in the States. These facts in themselves favour the conclusion that Sikh thought in the States has advanced *pari passu* with that of outside districts. The depressed classes meeting of August 1909 was attended by Sirdar Daljit Singh of Kapurthala and had the sympathy of the Hon'ble Sirdar Partap Singh of the same State. The Educational Conference has received constant assistance from States officials such as Sodhi Sujana Singh of Patiala; in fact it is credibly reported that the young Maharajah of Patiala was induced to accept the presidency of the Rawalpindi Conference, but was eventually dissuaded by his *ahlkara* from fulfilling his promise. The definitely anti-British character of the intrigues in Patiala, led by Sirdar Pritam Singh and Gurdit Singh and resulting in their dismissal in November 1910, has already been alluded to; and there is more than sufficient evidence to justify the belief that the loyalty of the Tikka Sabib of Nabha leaves much to be desired. Sant Aitar

Singh, a resident of Mastuana, on the borders of the Jhind, Patiala and Nabha States, and a leading figure in the *Tat Khalsa movement* is believed to have much influence in the States. In October 1910 he was taken in procession through Patiala, seated by the side of the Granth Sahib on an elephant, and was met by the Maharaja and presented with a *nazar* of Rs 51. At the Rawalpindi Educational Conference, 1911, as has already been related, the cause of the Sikh National Educational Fund was warmly espoused by Sirdar Joginder Singh, Home Minister of Patiala, who undertook to work for the cause and collect funds in his State; and most of the resolutions passed on that occasion were seconded by Sodhi Sujana Singh of Patiala. Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia, the leading figure in Sikh politics outside the States, is intimately connected with some of the Sikh Chiefs. His eldest son is married to the daughter of Sirdar Jiwan Singh of Shahzadpur, the girl's mother being a sister of the late Maharaja of Patiala. Another daughter of Jiwan Singh is married to the minor Raja of Faridkote, and one of his sons is betrothed to the daughter of Sirdar Joginder Singh, the present Home Minister of Patiala. It was the influence of Jogindar Singh and Sundar Singh that induced the Maharaja's provisional acceptance of the presidentship of the Rawalpindi Conference. Jogindar Singh is a native of Rasulpur in the Amritsar District, and he was appointed Home Minister of Patiala before the Maharaja's departure to England in May 1911. At that time it was within the bounds of possibility that Joginder Singh might himself have to take leave during the Maharajah's absence, in which case it was His Highness's wish that Sirdar Sundar Singh should temporarily fill the position of Home Minister.

While it would be impossible to express a definite opinion as to the present attitude of the Sikh States, there seems to be a balance of probability in favour of the view that it would be at least unwise to assume that the present political situation in them is radically different from that of the Sikh districts under British administration.



23. In the attempt which has been made to delineate the more important outward manifestations of Sikh politics, it has been found possible simultaneously to indicate in what directions there lurked danger to Government under existing conditions. The most fundamental and immediate of the evils which the present situation seems likely to produce is the dismantling of the fabric of the orthodox Sikh faith, with a consequent disregard of the loyal traditions which have hitherto powerfully affected the character of the Sikh attitude towards the British administration. Whether the cult of the Tat Khalsa faith may tend eventually to throw its professors into the arms of the Arya Samaj, it is yet too early, on the material available, to hazard a prophecy; the constant harping on Sikh "nationality" which is at present a pronounced feature of the Tat Khalsa propaganda would seem to preclude all possibility of an immediate union. It seems likely, too, that the decision of the recently formed Hindu Elementary Education League, to teach Hindi in the Dev Nagri character instead of Punjabi in the Gurmukhi character, will still further widen the breach. But there need be no hesitation in predicting that those Sikhs who affect the new faith will inevitably tend to degenerate physically, and to become less and less reliable an asset as regards their loyalty to the Crown. The movement is in any case fatal to the continued existence of the orthodox Sikh as the term is now understood, for it engenders a disregard of the creed and ritual of the tenth Guru which have done so much to raise the Sikh to his present high level of excellence as a man and a soldier. The consequences may be serious if ever the Tat Khalsa party succeed in obtaining possession of the Golden Temple, and are in a position to arrogate to themselves the leadership in religious affairs which they have already assumed in politics. The probability of their meeting with success in such a move is not very remote. In 1907 the designs of the Tat Khalsa party on the Golden Temple formed the subject of a complaint made by a deputation of Sikh priests to the Raja of Nahha. Since then it has on several occasions been reported that constant endeavours are being made by the Tat Sikhs to

win over the granthis and pujaris of the Golden Temple, though with what degree of success has not been ascertained. The success of the Tat Khalsa efforts in this direction is bound to be productive of exceedingly far-reaching results as affecting the future of the Sikh religion.

It is somewhat difficult to explain clearly to what precise extent neo-Sikhism is likely to prove more immediately dangerous than Tat Khalsaism to which it is so closely akin. If any distinction between them is possible it is this : The Tat Khalsa movement may mature but slowly, though it seems bound ultimately to rob the Army of a valuable asset by evolving a type of Sikh whom it will be no longer desirable or possible to enlist; the neo-Sikh party, on the other hand, may at any time become an active danger if ever it believes that circumstances favour the chances of its making a successful bid for victory. The British Government, more particularly the Military administration, has put itself into a queer position as regards the Sikhs, who have been fostered and patted and taught to regard themselves as a great nation with great national traditions. This glorification of the Sikhs has been productive of curious results, because, while it has kept the banner of Sikhism flying to the great advantage of Government, it now appears to be likely to be used as an instrument to scourge us by a section of those for whose good it was primarily undertaken. Neo-Sikhism is nonetheless dangerous because it may appear outwardly to be merely an exaggerated form of a cult of the birth of which Government has itself been largely responsible. The Chief Khalsa Diwan and the neo-Sikhs generally more particularly adhere to Guru Govind Singh who welded the Sikhs into a militant race. Though some of the members of the Diwan and Singh Sabhas do no more than endeavour to promote homogeneity and progress, there are others who have become inflated with Guru Govind Singh's military teachings and try to spread that inflation to the Sikhs generally. That is the essence of neo-Sikh politics, and the evidence which has been adduced to prove the existence of the movement receives support from the independent personal observations of many officers of

great experience. The neo-Sikh party is suffering from what may be expressively, if vulgarly, termed "wind in the head", and the advent of what appeared to it a favourable opportunity for action might readily stir it into active rebellion. The mere existence of the movement is a constant potential source of danger, though the degree of acuteness which that danger may assume is necessarily contingent on many different circumstances. It is because of this aspect of neo-Sikhism that an attempt has been made to distinguish it from Tat Khalsaism with which it is intimately connected. It is the political side of the Tat Khalsa creed and one of the most disquieting features of the whole Tat Khalsa movement is the seeming readiness with which its followers tend to drift into the militant party of the neo-Sikhs. There are, of course, not a few orthodox Sikhs who are disloyal and whose disloyalty is in nowise due to the assimilation of Tat Khalsa doctrines; the speedy absorption of such into the neo-Sikh party is almost inevitable, so that neo-Sikhism may be regarded no less as an organised movement for the corrupting of the loyal than as a rallying point for the malcontents and the already disaffected.

The participation of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, under its present leadership, in the control of Sikh education is a matter which cannot be regarded with indifference. Until the politics of the Diwan undergo a change for the better, it would be extremely inadvisable, either politically or religiously, to allow it a free hand in moulding the character and opinions of the rising generation of Sikhs. The adoption of the war-cry of Education, which has recently been raised, has been a singularly astute move, because it has enabled the Diwan to command the financial assistance and moral support of many whose sympathies incline neither to its religion nor politics. The peculiar danger of the Sikh Educational Conference seems to lie in the possibility it opens up of a certain section of the Sikhs, who are objectionable both religiously and politically, being able to graft their ideals and policy on the whole of the Sikh community. The danger is not lessened by the fact that the Diwan is at present able to enlist on

its side many Sikhs whose assistance is ignorantly given for the furtherance of objects which in reality they view with disapproval and even repugnance.

There are undoubtedly factors in the present situation of Sikh politics which must give rise to no little anxiety, or which may even be regarded as having in them elements of active danger. On the other hand it is doubtful whether the Diwan has yet won much influence among the masses of the rural Jat Sikh population, and therein for the present lies no inconsiderable safe-guard. The pro-Hindu party, again, is controlled by soi-distant spiritual leaders who profit largely by the offerings of their followers, and who are not, therefore, likely to make common cause with the Diwan or to see with Indifference its coffers filled with contributions which at present form one of their most lucrative sources of income; a union between them and the Diwan is at present highly improbable, because of the essentially irreconcilable nature of the interests involved. The Manjha-Malwa jealousy, too, is still a powerful factor in Sikh politics, as the recent formation of the Central Khalsa Diwan conclusively prove, and this jealousy will probably for some time to come make concerted action between the parties difficult. Finally the present leaders of the Chief Khalsa Diwan itself are not men of commanding ability or influence; the persistent rumours of peculation in its funds may before long result in exposing it as an unprincipled clique of self-seekers, and, by giving the lie to its professions of disinterested zeal for the common good of the Sikhs, may incidentally serve to discredit the movements which it has inaugurated.

These are a few considerations which may allay in some measure the uneasiness to which a study of present-day Sikh politics must inevitably, in a greater or less degree, gives rise. At the same time the unlettered masses are rapidly becoming a thing of the past and the gradual spread of education tends more and more to remove the obstacles which lie in the way of the Diwan's successfully appealing to the passions and prejudices of the proletariat.

By the time that the lower classes comprise a considerable leavening which has enjoyed the advantages of the new "national" education, there will doubtless be a corresponding degree of solidarity visible in the Sikh ranks and circumstances producing any decided coincidence of interests might at any time sweep away the dividing barrier of Manjha-Malwa jealousy.

24. In the foregoing pages an endeavour has been made to present in connected form the many items of information collected from different sources regarding developments in Sikh politics up to the present time. Most of such items deal with only exceedingly limited portions of the general question and their co-ordination has been a matter of some difficulty. Mere hearsay evidence has in no single instance been relied on to justify the conclusions that have been arrived at, and it has been regarded as of value only when it was supported by information derived from other independent sources and when its general tenour was clearly in keeping with such facts as are established beyond possibility of dispute. Similarly several reports of a markedly alarmist character have been rejected into because even their partial acceptance must give rise to an impression that the situation is far more serious than either the facts before us, or reasonable inferences based on these facts, would justify us in believing it to be. Every effort, too, has been made to avoid putting on hearsay evidence accepted as reliable or on actual facts any strained or unnatural construction which could not be supported by a consideration of past events or a not unduly pessimistic forecast of possible future developments.

Lastly it must be clearly understood that, though all opinions expressed and inferences drawn are believed to be only such as are warranted by the evidence now available, there can be no guarantee that all or any of such opinions and inferences will eventually prove to be correct. The movements described are as yet somewhat inchoate and illdefined. Moreover Indian, not to say Sikh, politics are in a strangely fluid condition, and what is true to-day may, by a complete derangement of the determining

conditions, be totally untrue to-morrow; and many currents which commence to run strongly in a definite direction seem either automatically to exhaust themselves, or to be counteracted by other cross-currents which run in bewildering numbers beneath an apparently calm surface. All that can be done is to determine in what directions the currents are setting in at a particular time and to point out what dangers may lie ahead; when found that such currents have either exhausted themselves or have changed their direction, the new situation so created will then have to be reviewed from a fresh stand-point. The future, therefore, will probably hold much that will necessitate material modification of the views herein expressed regarding the present nature of political movements among the Sikhs.

SIMLA	}	D. PETRIE,
The 11th August, 1911		Asstt. Director of Criminal Intelligence

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## Remarks by the Government of India

This memorandum represents a most earnest effort to interpret in a readable form the masses of information on our records in connection with modern developments of Sikh movements and politics. In the concluding paragraph Mr. Petrie has disclaimed infallibility and permanence for the conclusion to which his labours have led him. Before the memorandum assumed its final shape a number of prominent Sikh gentlemen and experienced Government officials were consulted and their opinions have corroborated in a remarkable degree the deductions drawn with great patience and ability by Mr. Petrie. An officer of special experience and qualifications has written of the memorandum in the following terms :—"The note is an interesting and correct synopsis of our information about the present attitude of the Sikhs. But, as Mr. Petrie points out, political conditions in the Punjab are extra-ordinarily fluctuating, and the apparent aims of a party to-day may be entirely changed tomorrow."

It is desirable to add that Mr. Petrie, as the result of his numerous interviews with prominent Sikhs, is afraid that he may have laid somewhat too much stress on the political nature of the *Tat Khalsa movement* which in its general nature and spirit may perhaps be less political and anti-British than the writings, speeches and acts of its most zealous exponents seemed to suggest. But in any case this movement seems to contain the germs of strong development on the political side and to deserve very careful study and observation.

The Sikhs are, for many reasons, of special interest to everybody engaged in maintaining British rule in India. Their modern developments are specially difficult to understand and

appraise aright. On the one hand we have to avoid overweening confidence and on the other undue suspicion. The exact point at which the Sikhs require guidance, stimulation or restraint from Government in their efforts to improve themselves calls not only for statesmanship but for information and knowledge. These considerations led me to direct Mr. Petrie to undertake the task which, in my opinion, the present memorandum shows that he has fulfilled most satisfactorily and creditably.

C. R. CLEVELAND,

Director of Criminal Intelligence.

DELHI : October 16, 1911.

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